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SADAT PLOT UNCOVERED WEEKS AGO

LOS ANGELES (UPI) -- EGYPTIAN SECURITY FORCES UNCOVERED AN ASSASSINATION PLOT AGAINST ANWAR SADAT THREE WEEKS AGO AND ASKED THE CIA FOR HELP, BUT THE PRESIDENT'S ASSASSINS MANAGED TO ESCAPE DETECTION IN A ROUNDUP OF 70 PLOTTERS, THE LOS ANGELES TIMES REPORTED TODAY.

TWO GROUPS OF CONSPIRATORS WERE ARRESTED AND EGYPTIAN OFFICERS BELIEVED THEY HAD ROOTED OUT THE DANGER, UNNAMED AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE SOURCES TOLD THE TIMES.

WHEN THE PLOT WAS FIRST DISCOVERED, THE TIMES SAID, THERE WERE EXTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE CIA AND SADAT'S SECURITY MEN. THE EGYPTIANS ARRESTED ABOUT 20 PEOPLE WHO DISCLOSED THE IDENTITIES OF 50 OTHERS ARRESTED LATE LAST MONTH.

"THE EGYPTIANS THOUGHT THEY HAD IT ALL," ONE OF THE AMERICAN SOURCES TOLD THE TIMES.

BUT QUESTIONING OF ASSAILANTS ARRESTED IN TUESDAY'S ATTACK HAS SHOWN THAT THEY WERE DIRECTLY CONNECTED TO THE PLOTTERS PREVIOUSLY ARRESTED AND INTERROGATED BY EGYPTIAN AUTHORITIES, THE TIMES SAID.

THE EGYPTIAN SECURITY FORCES AND THE CIA BELIEVE THAT A SMALL GROUP OF EXTREMISTS -- SOME IN THE MILITARY -- PLOTTED AND PERPETRATED THE ASSASSINATION, SOURCES TOLD THE PAPER. THE INTELLIGENCE SOURCES ALSO SAID NO SIGN OF DIRECT LIBYAN OR OTHER OUTSIDE AID FOR THE CONSPIRACY HAS BEEN UNCOVERED.

THE TIMES SAID AMERICAN SECURITY EXPERTS WERE CHAGRINED AT THE PERFORMANCE OF SADAT'S BODYGUARDS BECAUSE THEY HAD BEEN TRAINED FOR A YEAR IN THIS COUNTRY AS PART OF A CIA PROGRAM TO ENHANCE SADAT'S SAFETY.

DURING THE TRAINING, THE EGYPTIANS HAD BEEN SCHOOLED IN STANDARD AMERICAN PROCEDURES FOR CONTROLLING CROWDS, GUARDING EXITS AND ENTRANCES, SAFEGUARDING OFFICES AND RESIDENCES AND PLANNING EVACUATIONS.

ONE AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER SAID THE SHOCK OF THE GRENADES THROWN BY THE ASSASSINS AT THE START OF THEIR ATTACK MIGHT EXPLAIN WHY SADAT'S EIGHT-MAN BODYGUARD TEAM DID NOT PUT UP ANY FIGHT TO KEEP THE KILLERS FROM REACHING SADAT.